



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A  
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## Minutes February 23, 2015

### Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, Glenice Pearson, Jim Thomas, Charles Weber, John Grego, Sam Holland, Margaret DuBard, and Becky Bailey

Absent: Mildred Myers, Virginia Sanders, Ann Furr

### Others present:

Quinton Epps, Richland County Conservation Dept. Director  
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Department  
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Department  
Ken Driggers, Contract Legal Counsel  
Jack McKenzie, Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission

Chair, Carol Kososki called the meeting to order at 3:35pm without a quorum present.

### Report of the Chair

Carol voiced her concern about several Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) members who have health issues, specifically Ann Furr, Becky Bailey, and Mildred Myers. Commission members expressed a strong desire to reach out and offer support to these individuals.

Carol passed around a recent article from *The State* regarding a booklet about Modjeska Monteith Simpkins produced by the S.C. Progressive Network Education Fund and made possible through an RCCC grant.

*A quorum was reached with the arrival of John Grego.*

**Agenda:** Margaret DuBard moved and Charles Weber seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Motion was approved.

**Minutes:** Charles moved to accept the minutes of January 26, 2015 as presented and was seconded by Glenice. Motion was approved.

### **Conservation Director's Report**

Owens Field

Quinton reported very little has changed on the project while waiting for the extra funding (\$100,000) from the City of Columbia. A privet removal workday at Owens Field will be held Saturday, April 18. Quinton met on-site with Synithia Williams, the new Richland County Stormwater Manager, to acquaint her with the project.

#### Viable Rural Lands

Quinton and Planning Director Tracy Hegler met with County Council at their January retreat and were given approval to proceed with the development of a Preservation Land Management Plan; however, no funding for a position was committed. The plan would cover a wide variety of initiatives oriented towards economic development, preservation and conservation in the county's rural lands. Once the focus is narrowed and specific programs are developed, funding will be requested for FY 17. One means of protecting working lands is through funding from the Natural Resource Conservation Service for conservation easements. To this end, Quinton and Nancy met with a real estate consultant about ways to prioritize parcels using GIS. Work is also being done with Central Midlands COG on a grant to leverage military funding for easements. The Development and Services Committee will meet on the 24<sup>th</sup> to consider the request from Quinton to negotiate for the purchase of one of the properties discussed in the January executive committee session. Glenice questioned if there are food deserts in the county and if so how will this impact the planning for rural areas.

#### **Conservation Committee Report**

##### Cabin Branch Conservation Corridor

Nancy explained the proposal for the development of the Cabin Branch Conservation Corridor. With the County purchase of the 604-acre Hopkins' parcels and two RCCC easements on Cabin Branch, the goal would be to acquire easements on the remaining parcels along Cabin Branch between Garners Ferry and Clarkson Road (phase 1). Protection of the creek would provide a strong water quality buffer, provide for wildlife habitat and corridor, and allow for hiking trails. Council would be asked to approve the plan. Charles made a motion for RCCC to support development of a Cabin Branch Conservation Corridor. John seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

##### NE Landfill

John referred everyone to a draft letter addressed to Council Chairman, Torrey Rush updating Council on the monitoring reports for Northeast Landfill. Although overall the landfill accepted less waste in 2014, the amount of industrial process waste, which can include solvents and lubricants, increased. Volatile organic compounds were found at several different well sites. Glenice mentioned there were ongoing complaints about the landfill from nearby residents. John said he would check with the Ombudsman's office to determine if any complaints had been registered there. It was suggested that specific recommendations should be included in the letter. Glenice moved, seconded by Jim Thomas to send a revised letter to Council. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Historic Committee Report**

Glenice explained the research proposal has not yet been advertised and is concerned over the length of time the process is taking. Carol questioned the costs and deliverables. Nancy explained the proposal had been divided into phases to spread out the costs which will become clearer when proposals are submitted. The deliverables are defined in the scope of services. Jim, Glenice, and

Nancy attended The Burning of Columbia seminar the previous week. Glenice, Becky, Nancy and Councilmember Livingston were present for the historical marker unveiling of the Confederate Soldiers' Home on Feb. 15.

### **Conservation Coordinator's Report**

#### Wateree River Heritage Preserve

Nancy recently attended a Cowasee Basin Task Force meeting where Bob Perry from SCDNR indicated SCDNR would take ownership of Cooks Mountain and a portion of Goodwill Plantation on February 25. A dedication event is planned for some time in April. Public use will ramp up slowly with public access at the end of summer. A management plan will be drafted once staff has been hired. The easement held by Ducks Unlimited is in the process of being strengthened. Carol asked Quinton to email Mr. Perry as a follow up and request an official update.

#### Grants Update

Nancy referred everyone to their copy of the grantees monthly expense reports for review. The Historic Committee was asked to approve two reallocations of grant funds within the project budgets of the Mann-Simons House and the Thompson Cottage, which they approved through email and phone communications. On Saturday, March 7, a viewing is scheduled of "Can Anything Good Come from Ridgewood?" The B-25 bomber open house is being held at Owens Field on March 14. \$602,000 worth of new grant applications have been received. Committees agreed to meet for Conservation grant presentations on March 12 and Historic grants on March 16.

Nancy also reported the letter RCCC sent to Council November 25, 2014 in support of the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Update but requesting a change was successful. Council requested staff to change the map to reflect Rural Small Lot as the future land use category instead of Neighborhood Low Density in the area near Twenty-five Mile Creek.

### **Public Input**

Mr. Jack McKenzie addressed the Commission regarding the feasibility of burying utilities when roadways are widened. In July 2014 Seth Rose proposed a motion that the County explore opportunities in burying power lines when penny projects are being implemented, which was approved. Transportation staff recommended undergrounding utilities be examined on a case-by-case basis. Mr. McKenzie provided information on costs and benefits. RCCC will consider any actions it could take at a later date.

Meeting adjourned 5:10pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant